



P.O Box 1083
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February 7, 2016

Helping to shape the use of our natural resources to protect the quality of life in Yamhill County.

Rep. Brian Clem, Chair
House Committee on Rural Communities, Water & Land Use

Re: HB 4079

Representative Clem and Committee members;

Friends of Yamhill County (FYC) works to protect natural resources through the implementation of land use planning goals, policies, and laws that maintain and improve the present and future quality of life in Yamhill County for both urban and rural residents. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the above referenced docket.

HB 4079 purports to address issues related to affordable housing. Some of its provisions would have a significant and negative impact on farm, forest, and resource lands and on the fundamental concept of urban growth boundaries, a cornerstone of Oregon's land use laws.

Currently cities are required to have a 20 year supply of land, available for all uses. If they do not have a 20 year supply they may expand their UGB upon showing need for more urban land. HB 4079 would allow a terrible precedent: expansion of UGBs for two unnamed cities, *regardless of their existing land supply*.

Worse, the bill would allow the cities to ignore existing law that mandates that highest quality farmland be the lowest priority for inclusion.

It is difficult to believe that the solution to our affordable housing issues is to expand our UGB's onto our best farmland beyond the current urban fringe. Extending a city's infrastructure to outlying areas is expensive and time consuming. The burden of these costs will surely impact the affordability of the new homes built there.

When the pilot projects fail, it is entirely foreseeable that developers will return to the legislature seeking to further undermine farmland protections with proposals that will not address the core need: affordable housing in existing neighborhoods where taxpayers have already invested in needed infrastructure.

HB 4079 purports to address affordable housing needs, but fails to address the real need. Instead, it undercuts Oregon's 2nd largest industry – agriculture.

We strongly oppose bill and urge you to reject it. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

//s//

Tom Abrego
Friends of Yamhill County

cc: Senate President Peter Courtney